(d) whether one of the reasons for farmers suicide is the high interest rates being charged by money lenders; and

(e) if so, the specific measures taken by the Central Government for ensuring cheap loans to farmers, particularly in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, where more farmers have committed suicide?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) The Government of Maharashtra appointed the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development and Research, Mumbai to study and analyse all the socio-economic issues underlying farmers' suicides in the State. The Institute has not yet submitted its final Report to the State Government.

(d) As reported by the State Government, increasing cost of loans is identified as one of the causes for suicide committed by farmers.

(e) In order to enhance credit flow to agriculture, the Government of India announced a credit package on 18th June, 2004, which envisaged doubling of agriculture credit over three years. It has, *inter-alia*, also envisaged debt restructuring in respect of farmers in distress and farmers in arrears by providing reschedulement of outstanding loans over a period of five years, special one time settlement scheme for setting the old and chronic loan accounts of small and marginal farmers and allowing Banks to finance the redeeming of loans taken by farmers from private moneylenders.

The Government of India is further addressing the varied credit needs of farmers through Kisan Credit Cards. In mitigating risks of farmers the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme is already in operation. The above interventions along with a slew of measures for augmenting agricultural production and marketing will over time reduce the distress of farmers.

Effect of soil erosion on agricultural productivity

†1075. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the productivity rate is getting affected due to the soil erosion in the country;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether it is also a fact that the soil erosion is to the extent of 400 tonnes per hectare in the country every year;

(d) if so, the facts in this regard and whether any action plan has been evolved at the national level by Government to check the soil erosion; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) The soil formation and erosion is a natural process occurring simultaneously to maintain the equilibrium in eco-system. Due to over exploitation, unscientific use of natural resources and other reasons, the land denudation is more than natural formation. The study conducted by the Central Soil and Water Conservation Research and Training Institute—Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Regional Centre, Dehradun revealed that there is reduction in yields of the crops and income to the farmers due to loss of top soils.

(c) to (e) As per available estimate, the average rate of soil erosion in the country is 16.4 tonnes per hectare per year. With a view to sustain agricultural productivity, control of soil erosion, water conservation and prevention of land degradation, Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture is implementing four Watershed Development Programmes/Schemes, namely, (i) National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Area (NWDPRA); (ii) Soil Conservation for Enhancing the Productivity of Degraded Lands in the Catchments of River Valley Project & Flood Prone River (RVP & FPR); (iii) Reclamation of Alkali Soil (RAS); (iv) Watershed Development Project for Shifting Cultivation Area (WDPSCA) and few Externally Aided Projects (EAPs). Three Watershed Development Programmes, *viz.*, (i) Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP); (ii) Desert Development Programme (DDP) and (iii) Integrated Wasteland Development Project (IWDP) are being implemented by Ministry Rural Development. In addition to these, Ministry of Environment & Forest is implementing a National Afforestation & Eco-Development Project Scheme (NAEPS) for soil and water conservation and afforestation. Under these programmes, since inception upto March 2005, an area of 28,533 million ha. has been developed with expenditure of Rs. 14577.32 crore. The working Group on Watershed Development, Rainfed Farming and Natural Resource Management for Tenth Five Year Plan, constituted by Planning Commission has suggested a perspective plan for development of

88.5 million ha. area in 20 years through Watershed Development Programmes. Accordingly, an area of 21.4 million ha. has been proposed for checking erosion, land degradation and thereby sustaining agricultural production under various Watershed Development Programmes with an estimated cost of Rs. 6422.95 crore during X Five Year Plan. An amount o f
Rs 1497.00 crore has been allocated for treatment of 3.36 million ha. area during 2005-06 under various watershed development programmes as per details attached as Statement.

Statement

Achievements since inception upto March, 2005 and target & outlay for X Five Year Plan including target & outlay for 2005-06 for various watershed development programmes

(Phy. in Lakh ha. & Fin. in Rs. Crore)

Sl.No.	Name of the Programme	Achievement since inception upto March, 2005		Tentative target and Outlay X Plan		Target and Outlay 2005-06	
		Phy.	Fin.	Phy.	Fin.	Phy.	Fin.
1.	NWDPRA	79.34	2397.56	20.00	1000.00	5.00	220.00
2.	RVP & FPR	60.87	1894.17	12.0	800.00	2.00	124.00
3.	WDPSCA	3.18	226.43	1.0	100.00	0.30	30.00
4.	RAS	6.59	96.64	1.0	100.00	0.20	7.00
5.	EAPs*	23.63	4756.36	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5.	DPAP	26.29	1742.06	68.0	1500.00	12.00	353.00
6.	DDP	14.70	1301.01	44.0	1100.00	6.00	268.00
7.	IWDP	61.96	1310.20	68.0	1800.00	8.00	485.00
8.	NAEPS	8.77	852.89	0.32	22.95	0.10	10.00
	TOTAL	285.33	14577.32	214.32	6422.95	33.60	1497.00

NWDPRA - National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas

RVP & FPR - River Valley Projects & Flood Prone Rivers

WDPSCA - Watershed Development Project for Shifting Cultivation Areas

RAS	-	Reclamation of Alkali Soil
EAPs	-	Externally Aided Projects
DPAP	-	Drought Prone Area Programme
DDP	-	Desert Development Programme
IWDP	-	Integrated Wasteland Development project
NAEPS	-	National Afforestation & Eco-development Project Scheme

Note: In case of EAPs outlay and target are not decided

Allocations to Uttar Pradesh under Macro Management Scheme

1076. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the funds allocated to Uttar Pradesh during the last three years ending 31st March, 2005 under Macro Management Scheme;

(b) the funds, so far, utilized by the State under the scheme, year-wise; and

(c) the specific purposes/projects on which the funds have been utilized?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) The funds allocated and released under Macro Management of Agriculture Scheme in respect of Uttar Pradesh during the last three years ending 31st March, 2005 are as indicated below:-

(Rs. in lakhs)

Year	Allocation	Release	Unspent balance	Utilization
2002-03	6885.00	6885.00	1229.35	7663.52
2003-04	6800.00	7375.00*	450.83	6717.24
2004-05	7000.00	8888.67*	1108.59	8212.66

*includes additional Central assistance released to the State.

(c) As per the Work Plans of the State Govt. of Uttar Pradesh, the funds released under the scheme were utilized for implementation of National Watershed Development Project for Rain fed Areas (NWDPRA), Up-gradation of Seed Production, Strengthening of Fertilizers and Pesticide Quality Control, Flood Prone Rivers (RVP), Support for Transfer of Technology, Infrastructure and Seed Testing Labs, Horticultural development, Sugarcane development, State Land Use Board, Boosting Cereal production in UP etc.